

NEWS FROM SCALE HOW.

DEAR EDITOR,

We arrived here at the beginning of the term in true Ambleside weather. As only open coaches awaited us at Windermere Station, we drove up under dripping umbrellas, but in spite of all managed to enjoy ourselves. We are glad to have Miss J. H. Smith, ex-student, with us still, as a member of the staff. There are fewer Juniors than usual this term, on account of there being seven ex-Seniors.

On the Tuesday evening after our arrival the Juniors gave us the usual entertainment, to which the ex-Seniors also contributed. The entertainment consisted of piano and violin solos, recitations and songs, and we spent a very enjoyable evening.

Owing to unfavourable weather, we have played hockey only twice. The Juniors have some very strong players amongst them, and we look forward to exciting matches between Seniors and Juniors.

About a week after our return we had a big snowstorm, which lasted for over a week. There was skating on Loughrigg Tarn, but Rydal Water did not freeze sufficiently to bear. The snow being so deep, we were looking forward to several days at least of tobogganing, and set off to the end of the terrace, at the earliest opportunity, with as many sledges as we could muster, but alas! we had been there for only a few minutes when Miss Wilson had a spill halfway down the hill, and broke her leg at the ankle. She has since been in bed, but we hope to see her down very soon. Of course, after that, tobogganing was stopped.

We were very fortunate in seeing the daylight comet several times, in consequence of cloudless skies. Star-gazing is most interesting under the guidance of Miss Stephens, who can always tell us all we want to know.

Nature and bird walks have been somewhat interrupted owing to the bad weather, but the Juniors are being gradually initiated into the natural wonders of the neighbourhood.

Miss Biggar gave us a most interesting and amusing drawing-room evening on Lewis Carroll. Extracts were read from several of his books, and Miss Bishop recited "The Walrus and the Carpenter." We were shown copies of Lewis Carroll's drawings. Miss Wearing sang "Dreamland." The following Tuesday evening Miss Bradford read a paper on Grieg, which was illustrated by piano and violin solos and songs. There is something fresh and original in all Grieg's music. Fräulein Grimm declaimed "Bergliot" in French with great dramatic power.

The Seniors are working very hard preparing for the Sloyd exam., which takes places at the end of the term (*i.e.*, after Easter).

Mr. Storey is giving a lecture on "Electricity" at the Assembly Rooms next Wednesday, February 16th, similar to the one he gave us here last year.

The Missionary Bazaar is fixed for March 17th. If any ex-students care to send contributions here before that date, they will be thankfully received.

FROM THE PRESENT STUDENTS.

Scale How, Ambleside.

February 10th, 1910.

NOTES FROM QUETTA.

There are so many strange things here. The crabs are a constant source of interest. The children nearly went wild with joy when they found the first "hole!" Swarms of a most curious insect have come here. Nobody seems to know anything about them. They have not been seen here for years and years—some people say for forty-five years—but I am not sure whether Quetta has been inhabited by English people so long. Some people say they take fifteen years to develop, and that the chrysalis is made underground. I have found several of the pupa cases fastened to the stems of plants, and somebody told me to-night that

you can see the holes in the earth near, where they have crawled out; but I have not seen them myself yet.

Some people say that they have been seen in different parts of India, and others say that they have been seen in Portugal. I wondered whether they might be the Tree Hoppers, or Tuneful Cicadæ. This is a very rough drawing done by electric light, and I am afraid the veins of the wings are not very accurate. The wings are very brittle, and are opalescent in colour. Some have brilliant orange bodies, with dark marks; others are less showy.

The first one we found was a great treasure, and C. and I both at once proceeded to paint him. It was the first creature that C. offered to paint of her own accord—in her play-time. Then there was the ceremony of letting the prisoner free, which all three children wanted to see. But that same evening we found a swarm of them in the trees at the end of the drive, making such a curious noise—rather like the sound of a small waterfall. It went on continuously, all night; but in the morning they had gone. We found them higher up the stream, and in a day or two the place was covered with them. They are on all the trees all along the stream for a long distance—some miles—and all over the garden. They just make the whirring noise, which is very loud when there are a great many insects. You hear it whenever you stop to listen, but you become so accustomed to it that sometimes you forget it is there. They neither sting nor bite, and at first it was thought they did no harm; but now people are beginning to fear lest they should do great damage to the trees by taking all their sap. I have watched them very closely and very often, but I cannot see how they make their noise (there is nothing on their legs that can do it, and their bodies hardly move), nor have I seen them suck the trees, though they certainly have a proboscis that looks as if it might do damage. The natives say they eat air, and they call them Taz—from the sound they make. They have been here since June 10th,

but their number is much less. Many drop into the stream, and a few appear to be eaten by birds, and I have heard of a dog who eats them.

Everybody speaks of them with such dislike that I think it is really rather a triumph that the children should be fond of them. They go about carefully picking up the dead ones they find and even picking up separate wings to admire. Being so plentiful does not at all detract from their value in the children's eyes. When we first came out here R. was terrified if a fly came near him. He used to shriek with terror, and would not look at a dog or a crab. To-night I watched him affectionately gazing at a baby toad, and murmuring to himself, "The little pet!"

We are in Baluchistan—not India—and I am simply longing to see more of India, though I love this place. The Pathans are so fierce-looking—they are really quite peaceable just here—but they are very picturesque, with their long strings of camels and their donkeys loaded beyond all imagination. Sometimes we see them shaving by the road-side, and tiny black mites bathing by the side of the road and pouring the water right over their heads from such glitteringly bright brass pots; but I should love to see the pilgrims bathing in the Sacred River, and see more of the different kinds of Indians. The bazaars are most fascinating—so full of colour and life and sounds; but all the people who have lived in India say it is not at all the same here. I wish we could have Hindu servants. Nearly all of them are Goanese; they may be good servants, but they are not so picturesque.

It is very hot here now—generally the thermometer is about 90 degrees, sometimes higher at 6 p.m. At 6 a.m. it is anything from 72 degrees to 80 degrees. From the papers we see that this is not much greater than at Allahabad, and yet the heat is so much more oppressive there. This must be due to the amount of moisture in the atmosphere. Here it is about 30, while there it varies from 70 to 90. I

wonder if a hygroscope is a very complicated instrument. We keep a temperature chart. (Later on I think it will be rather interesting, because we shall have such great drops in the autumn—sometimes, I believe, as much as twenty degrees; though this is nothing to what people experience in Seistan, only a few hundred miles away. A gentleman told me he started when the thermometer was at 80, and after sundown it dropped to zero!) This is all in parenthesis, and I hope you will forgive my rambling. We keep the temperature, but it is of very little use unless we can measure the amount of moisture as well. It is so difficult to find out things here. We really do seem to have gone to the ends of the earth when there is no encyclopædia in the house and when nobody can tell you how a hygroscope is made and how it works. But it is the same with everything—nobody knows the name of a plant or a bird. I believe there is only about one lady here who is at all interested in these things, and she knows a good deal about the Flora and Fauna of the country. She has a large collection of the finches from here, and she has a wonderful way of finding birds' nests. She is painting the wild flowers here, but she has only done about fifty, and there are a great many more. She goes home in September, and she wants C. and me to press and paint all we can, and she will send them to Kew and have them identified. Then they may be put into the museum at Quetta, where the flowers of the country are very badly represented. There is no flora of Baluchistan printed. We have Oliver's "Flowers of India," which is not much use, and I left my Bentham and Hooker at home, because I thought everything would be different out here. Trees only grow when they are planted. All along the stream there are willows and poplars and mulberries, and in the older gardens too, but the new gardens look very bare, and even grass does not grow readily.

This may seem a dull picture, but I cannot describe to you the beauty of the mountains—different each time you look

at them. Little N. said the other day: "Look, those mountains are quite blue, like the sky"; and so they were, though hardly anyone would believe it. According to the time of day they vary, and sometimes they appear so distinct and separate, and sometimes just a solid block; and when the moon rises from behind one of the hollows it is all too beautiful; and yet they are as different as possible from our beloved hills at home.

I am afraid I am making this very long, but I must just tell you about Mrs. W., because I know you will be glad. She is the lady who is so keen on Nature out here. She knew nothing about the P.N.E.U. till I told her; at least, Miss Z. showed her C.'s N.N.B. first, and she was so pleased with it, and she has been very much interested in all the papers we have shown her, and in what we have told her, and I think she hopes to join when she goes home in the autumn. She wants to teach her little girls herself, so, of course, she is interested. My PIANTA came last week with the account of the Students' Conference. It must have been *splendid*.

ELEANOR SMITH.

Quetta, India.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE.

Birmingham is a large city to arrive in all alone, for the first time, but I wonder how many students would not gladly have been in my shoes as I wandered from the station to Bull Street upon this, the first day of the Conference. The Friends' Meeting House I easily found, for at its entrance were two large boards, upon which were posted the programmes of the Thirteenth Annual Conference of the P.N.E.U.

How fascinating those programmes looked! No wonder that the meetings were so well attended. I read the boards

with great satisfaction, for I meant to attend every single meeting; but a great sigh was heaved for you, dear students, who, instead of enjoying this Conference, would be dutifully teaching your various pupils. Would it not be a splendid plan if our postesses gave us four days' holiday at the time of the Conference, just that we might be re-inspired, and go back to our work with fresh enthusiasm?

By this time numbers of ladies were entering the Meeting House, and I followed with the rest. There were crowds inside the hall, and all seemed so keen to take an active part in the Conference. At last, to my joy, I saw Miss Parish, who asked me to help Miss Franklin at the Bookstall. It was nice to be talking to a student again, and a very happy time we spent together, telling people the merits of all the various books, with the result that at the end of the Conference we had sold £18 worth.

It is now three o'clock, and all the members, about 200, are assembled.

Mrs. George Cadbury, President of the Birmingham Committee, gave an address of welcome. She regretted the snow which had fallen during the night, but said that in spite of the cold weather, we must believe we had a warm welcome.

The Earl of Lytton replied. "The Union was," he said, "extremely fortunate in having Birmingham for a meeting-place." During this Conference we were to contrast two different ideals of education. We were to set against each other the demands of idealism on the one hand and utilitarianism on the other, and we were to decide what were the desirable proportions in which the two forms ought to be mixed in a true education.

Later we were received to tea by the London Executive Committee, and this gave us a splendid opportunity for making acquaintance with members from other towns.

The evening meeting, at 8.30, took place in the New University, which was only opened this year by the King.

About 1,000 members were present, all looking very attractive in evening dress. Sir Oliver Lodge read a paper upon the "Training of the Child." Parts of it might have come straight from Miss Mason's book, so P.N.E.U. was it. "The grammatical errors of young children," he said, "were best left uncorrected, for such corrections deprived the child of naturalness, and the adult of some pleasure. If twins, for instance, were asked whose birthday it was, and if after looking at each other they responded 'We's,' anyone who would attempt to correct the statement would be guilty of blasphemy."

On Tuesday morning Lady Campbell read Miss Mason's paper on "Two Articles in the Equipment of Boys and Girls—Opinions and Principles." How I wished Miss Mason could have been there, for she would have enjoyed seeing the interest of the audience in the subject, and we should have delighted to have her in our very midst.

Her paper was followed by one on "Environment in Relation to Nervous Stability," by Dr. Helen Webb. "Life rushes now; it seldom walks or trots quickly," was the opening remark; and throughout the lecture Dr. Webb showed us how we could fortify the nervous system in order that it might meet successfully this strenuous life.

Mrs. Edwin Gray opened the afternoon session with a paper on "Girls of Leisure and Social Work." The ideas given were most inspiring, and she urged parents to let their grown-up daughters do some definite outside work.

Miss Bradley, an ex-student, read her most interesting paper on "Direct and Indirect Moral Teaching." It was nice to feel that one of "ourselves" was able to contribute to the Conference; and, had you been there, you must have felt a proud satisfaction for the one of "us" that so ably delivered such valuable ideas.

Wednesday morning was given up to visiting, either the New University or the village of Bournville. In the train on the way to the latter a lady in my carriage remarked that

she would very much like to make the acquaintance of a House of Education student. She seemed to wonder what the ready-made article would be like; but was, to my dismay, stopped from saying what her imagination pictured them to be by my hostess formally introducing me.

We had the most enjoyable morning at Bournville, and were first entertained by a Swedish Drill display given by the Junior work-girls in the open verandah. They wore costumes like ours; indeed, I could imagine we were back at Scale How drilling in the gymnasium. Senior work-girls next did morris dancing in costumes; it was very pretty, and the girls seemed to enjoy themselves much more than the poor drillers had done. We next saw a swimming display by girls in the beautiful big swimming-bath, and then a gymnastic performance by boys in the gymnasium. We next entered the Bournville Schools, where the children sang several songs to us in the most musical way.

After making a tour of the village we returned to the building, where we were entertained to the most delicious lunch by Mr. and Mrs. Cadbury.

As we left Bournville we wondered why all great manufacturers did not make similar model villages, and so give their workers healthy, happy lives.

In the afternoon we heard a very interesting paper by Sir Martin Conway on "How to Interest Young People in Art." Later, Miss Parish gave an address to the girls of Edgbaston High School. Her subject, "Now and For Ever," was most inspiring, and the girls present so much enjoyed it that all who were not there were made to feel that they had foolishly missed a great treat.

At 8.30 the same evening Mr. Walter Ford gave a very entertaining lecture on "Songs for Children," which was illustrated by a number of children's songs, rendered by a choir of ladies.

Mr. Ford condemned the kindergarten songs as being unmusically written and unnaturally worded. We were

made to feel the truth of this statement when the choir sang some two or three, which had the effect of holding the audience in fits of laughter. The nursery rhymes were a pleasing contrast, and we all realised their genuine beauty when we heard several sung with great spirit by the ladies.

Books recommended for children by Mr. Ford were: "Folk Songs for Children," by Baring Gould and Cecil Sharp; "Christmas Songs," Peter Cornelius; Sir Charles Stampford's edition of "Moore's Melodies."

Upon Thursday, the fourth day, we had a very full programme. Mrs. Clement Parsons opened her paper, on "The Intellectual Flame," with the words: "It is not a man's erudition that makes him intellectual, but rather a sort of virtue that delights in all beautiful and vigorous thinking."

Next followed a lecture by Miss Hodgson upon "Educational Ideals of the Renaissance and Ourselves." The paper was an exceedingly well-thought-out one, and it took me back to the Oscar Browning days, for once again we heard about Rabelais, Montaigne, Rousseau, etc.

The lecture which perhaps had the most crowded audience was given by Rev. Canon Masterman, his subject being "The Education of the Imagination." A sweet little story was told in the discussion which illustrates splendidly the power of a child's imagination. A small child ran to her mother, saying, "Oh, mamma, do look through the window; there is an elephant in the garden." The mother walked solemnly to the window, and upon observing but an unusually large cat, reproached her little girl's lack of truthfulness by saying: "Mary, go up to your bedroom and pray earnestly that God may forgive you." The child disappeared, to return again in a few minutes. "Well, and has God forgiven you?" asked the mother gravely. "Yes," said the child. "He said to me, 'It's all right, Miss Jennings, I nearly mistook the cat for an elephant myself!'"

For lack of space I must say nothing about Dr. Charles Waldstein's lecture on "The Aesthetic Element," or the

Bishop of Birmingham's address on " Shall we Send our Sons to the University?"

The last day of the Conference arrived all too soon; we could not realise four days had so quickly passed.

We listened intently to Mrs. Ginever's enthusiastic address on " Imagination in Work and Play," and then came the Discussion Meeting. Mrs. Franklin filled the Chair splendidly, and we all felt we could not have our thanks to the Birmingham Committee more sincerely rendered than through her mouth.

Sadly we left the hall, feeling that there we had learnt so much, and yet wondering how we could act upon all the ideas we had received. But such a conference had inspired us, and we were grateful for all the help given us by the P.N.E.U. More than this, we looked forward to the helping hand we should again receive next year, when the Conference would be held in London. Meanwhile, we felt inspired to do all we could for our Union, and our desire was that it might grow in members, and thus in some way repay the debt of gratitude which would be lastingly owed to our beloved founder.

M. M. ROBOTHAM.

THE TEACHING OF FRENCH TO BEGINNERS.

The teaching of modern languages is a subject which is receiving a great deal of attention at the present time, and some of us feel that we should like to know more of the experiences of other teachers in dealing with the various methods advocated. It seemed to me that it might be very helpful if, through the medium of the PIANTA, we gave suggestions of methods and books which we had ourselves found useful. I offer these few details of my own experience with great diffidence and in the hope that others better

qualified than myself will follow up the subject and give us the benefit of their knowledge.

Most of us, I expect, realise something at least of the value of the Modern or Direct method of language teaching, but some find difficulties when they try to carry it into practice. We have all of us known something also of the Gouin method; but, personally, I find that it is very difficult to prevent the learning of the Series from becoming purely mechanical and a matter of memory. Many children dislike " Gouin," and it is almost impossible to do the actions in a room where other children are doing different work. Then again, the children do not take a sufficient part in the lesson themselves to make it a matter of living interest. I also found, and most of the teachers whom I have consulted agreed with me, that it was essential that the child should see the words written from the very beginning, and should learn to write French from the first. It seemed to me, and it was, I found, the experience of others also, that one learned a great deal more French, with less effort and more interest from the Direct Method, as it is worked out in Dent's First French Book, for instance.

I have had some slight experience in various methods of teaching French from the most old-fashioned way, with grammar rules in English—English exercises to be written in French, and bits of verbs and words to be learned by heart—to the modern use of pictures and Dent's First French book. It goes without saying how much both teacher and children preferred the latter. But I found two disadvantages connected with it. First, the pictures are essential, and it is not always possible to have pictures. Secondly, I found that with small children I was obliged to give a certain amount of explanation in English. I have lately come across a book which seems to me to possess many, if not all of the advantages of the Direct Method, and has neither of its drawbacks.

I have been using this book, and have up till now met